

TWENTY YEARS' EXPERIENCE

OF A

PUBLIC VACCINATOR.

SMALL POX, VACCINATION,

AND

RE-VACCINATION.

BY

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LECTURE NOTES

BY

W. V. QUINE

1960

1, Albert Terrace, Regent's Park,

May 1st, 1866.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your note of the 28th ult., I beg to say that my views upon Vaccination and Re-vaccination are pretty generally known. I have ceased to vaccinate for many years, and I am still of opinion that there are many individuals of a scrofulous habit, anæmic or bloodless state of the body that ought not to be vaccinated. The accompanying letter* which appeared in the "Morning Advertiser" on Wednesday last, [April 25,] is another illustration of the fact. I could furnish you with many if time would permit. I have just been reading a book entitled "Peking and the Pekingese," by Dr. Rennie. He too seems to have discovered the fallacy of Vaccination, and says, "at Hong Kong in 1854, while small-pox was prevailing, a lady well known there had herself vaccinated, but in place of its taking in the ordinary manner it produced an attack of the worst form of small-pox, which proved fatal. Almost coincidental with this, the same consequences took place in an infant; and these two fatal occurrences made a strong impression on the minds of the Hong Kong public, against the practice of Vaccination during the prevalence of Small-pox. From cases such as these, which I may state are much more numerous than is supposed, it would seem as if vaccine matter in periods when the atmosphere has assumed an epidemic constitution favouring suppurative disease, acts as a true germinating influence, when introduced into systems at the time affected with what may be termed the small-pox habit of body."

The paper I read before the Sanitary Committee of St. Pancras upon "Vaccination, Re-vaccination, &c.," on the 9th June, 1863, you are at perfect liberty to publish or make known in any way you please. Wishing you every success in your humane and philanthropic endeavour to oppose one of the most arbitrary and tyrannical measures of this enlightened age,

Believe me, yours faithfully,

WILLIAM J. COLLINS, M.D.

Richard B. Gibbs, Esq.,
1, South Place, Finsbury.

* Signed "C. H., a British Mother."

SMALL-POX, VACCINATION, AND RE- VACCINATION.

Jenner and his disciples maintained that after vaccination we were for ever "secure against the small-pox." Cow-pox, said this great philanthropist (?) "admits of being inoculated on the human frame with the most perfect ease and security, and is attended by the singularly beneficial effect of rendering through life the person inoculated perfectly secure against small-pox." It is now some 60 years since he made known his discovery—55 years since, the National Vaccine Institution was formed—23 years since, the Legislature provided by (Act 3 and 4 Vic., c. 29,) that vaccination at the public cost might be claimed of the local authorities—10 years since the compulsory Act was passed, and yet we find no diminution in the virulence of this frightful and loathsome disease. In fact, during these last 16 years we have had no less than 5 epidemic outbreaks of the small-pox in the metropolis.

These frequent visitations of this intractable disease are assigned to neglected and imperfect vaccination; and yet in 1854, the year following the compulsory Act, the Public Vaccination of England at all ages exceeded by more than 75,000, the total number of births.

It must not, however, be forgotten that small-pox, in addition to its epidemic outbreaks, where atmospheric and other influences favour its development, is never altogether absent from certain localities as an Endemic—especially where you have defective ventilation, bad drainage, and over-crowding.

There are, perhaps, few subjects in connection with medicine, considering the legal machinery to enforce, and *the vested interest* at stake that require more cautious and delicate

handling than vaccination. But facts are stubborn things; this is really and truly a question of fact, and one, in my humble opinion, that wants ventilating. It is not my wish or interest to condemn a practice that has been in existence these last 60 years; but simply to give you the result of my experience from actual observation, and to elicit a fair and unprejudiced consideration of this so-called protection—the Cow-pox. The Doctors appear to have made up their minds upon this subject, and it never will be settled by Medical arguments alone; perhaps no principle of antagonism that has manifested itself among nations has ruffled more tempers and excited so much bad feeling as vaccination. This subject is not one merely of professional or scientific interest, but one of the deepest moment to the public generally, which is the only excuse I can offer for intruding myself upon your notice.

In 1847-8, and 1851-2 I had every opportunity, as Public Vaccinator to one of the largest Parishes in the Metropolis, of watching the progress of small-pox among the vaccinated and un-vaccinated, independent of which numerous cases of clandestine inoculation with small-pox came under my notice. About two-thirds of these inoculated cases had been successfully vaccinated. I watched the progress of the disease with more than ordinary care and anxiety, and found when the children were strong and healthy both among the vaccinated and un-vaccinated, that the disease was somewhat modified in both patients; but those who were exposed to the MORE CONCENTRATED *sources of the infection and of delicate constitution* or scrofulous habit shared a very different fate, especially *those who had previously been debilitated by vaccination*, several of whom had confluent small-pox in its most malignant form. Some persons, particularly those who were physically strong, accustomed to pure air, cleanliness, and moderation in all things, I found unsusceptible to the vaccine disease. A well-known pugilist* who was in training for some professional engagement, came to me to be vaccinated, the small-pox having broken out where he was lodging; he had not been vaccinated in infancy, and never had the small-pox. I performed the operation upon him and two others at the same time; at the expiration of a week I saw him again with the other cases, both of whom had taken, but I found little or no signs on this distinguished individual. I then vaccinated him and three children with matter direct from the Cow, saw him a week afterwards with no better result. He became dissatisfied, and was immediately afterwards inoculated with the Small-pox, and that too failed, thus proving that he was constitutionally strong, and capable of resisting disease alto-

* Tom Sayers.

gether. With respect to the children, the eldest, a most lovely child, with large blue eyes and flaxen hair, suffered severely after vaccination; in fact, for more than 10 days her life was despaired of. On the third day after the operation the arm and glands in the axilla began to swell, delirium and low typhoid fever ensued for more than a fortnight, when the arm began to slough, and the bone was nearly denuded of flesh. Change of air was recommended, and the patient was taken to Margate, returned at the expiration of six months with some ugly-looking scars, and the arm useless. The other two children above alluded to, I had an opportunity of watching carefully, being in daily attendance upon their sister; they were vaccinated at the same time and with the same matter, and passed through all the stages of the vaccine disease with very little constitutional disturbance, and left well marked cicatrices so graphically delineated both by pen and pencil by my friend Walter Cooper Dendy, in his work entitled, "Varieties of Pock." If I were to depict one-third of the numerous unhappy victims that I have seen laid prostrate by vaccination—

"I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word would
Harrow up thy soul, freeze thy very blood,
And make each particular hair stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful Porcupine."

These are sights, Mr. Chairman, we cannot forget when once we have seen them, however we may wish; they take possession of the mind, and will not be forgotten.

If the immortal Jenner had instituted and thoroughly matured his experiments amongst the class of patients that I have seen operated upon—patients, by the way, who are physically and mentally low in the scale of human existence, and whose lives are spent in the very hot bed of infection, instead of dairymaids, blacksmiths, and farm labourers, whose very occupation and calling render them free from disease, he would have arrived at a very different conclusion.

But there is a fashion in everything—it is the fashion now to be *re-vaccinated*—at one time it was fashionable to bleed and purge. Periodical vaccination is now the order of the day, some recommend it every 7 years, others every 3, but the most inveterate of all vaccinators look upon it as the panacea for all disease. One gentleman, I perceive by the *Lancet*, says it is a specific for the whooping-cough, and recommends it strongly. It must be obvious, therefore, to the least reflective that vaccination, both in practice and in theory, is altogether a contradiction—disguise it as you please, there are individuals who, from some derangement of blood, or other constitutional idiosyncrasy, *ought not to be vaccinated*. For instance, in 1860 the small-pox broke out in the camp at Shorncliffe.

Vaccination was enforced among the soldiers, who suffered severely from its poisonous influence; very many died, and others had their arms amputated to save their lives; the death, too, of Sir Culling Eardley and others illustrate this fact. The loss of this distinguished baronet is said to have been caused by the use of impure matter; whereas, I find upon enquiry that many of his Household were vaccinated at the same time with the same matter, "and it took beautifully." Were it not almost universally performed among all sects, and all classes, high and low, rich and poor, the present argument in favour of vaccination and re-vaccination would be entitled to some respect. But when we find small-pox daily and hourly increasing, and paying no respect to the vaccinated or un-vaccinated, and that by a recent return from the Small-pox Hospital more than 80 per cent. of the small-pox cases have been successfully vaccinated, it would not, I think, be uninteresting, considering how deeply we are all concerned, to know whether any experiments and what experiments have been instituted during the last 40 or 50 years, or whether we pin all our faith upon the Jennerian hypothesis.

In the above return from the Small-pox Hospital the mortality is said to be greater among the un-vaccinated than the vaccinated. This would appear to the unthinking somewhat in favour of vaccination, but when we take into consideration the character of the patients that are admitted into this Institution, we find they are of two distinct classes, viz., household and domestic servants who have been well cared for, well clothed, well housed and fed upon the best food, and last though not least, living in well ventilated houses—these are the vaccinated. But the un-vaccinated are a very different class, and are generally the outcasts of society, living in back slums and alleys, or sent from overcrowded workhouses, and are thus physically and mentally lower in the scale, and have less power to resist the disease—these are the unvaccinated. The nurses, too, at the Small-pox Hospital are said never to have taken the disease simply because they were vaccinated when first appointed. Now, it is pretty well known that some persons are so constituted like Jenner's Milk Maid and my patient the Pugilist; a class of individuals that are proof against any disease, and no argument in favour of giving a disease to those whose vital energies are already sufficiently depressed by surrounding circumstances.

I have given you the result of my experience as briefly as the subject will permit, and after careful examination of all the facts, I am bound to admit, even at the risk of exciting the *risible muscles* of my professional brethren, that I have no

faith in vaccination, nay, I look upon it with the greatest possible disgust, and firmly believe that it is often the medium of conveying many filthy and loathsome diseases from one child to another, and no protection whatever against the Small-pox. Indeed, I consider we are now living in the Jennerian epoch for the slaughter of *Innocents*, and the unthinking portion of the adult population.

WILLIAM J. COLLINS, M.D.